Icknield Community College
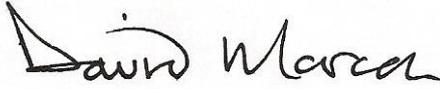
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Icknield Community College

Approval & Review

Author: Mrs V Pickford

Review Period: Annually

Status of Policy: Statutory Key Policy

Reviewed by (Committee):	Governing Body
Date of Review:	25 January 2022

Signed:

(Chair of Governing Body)

Icknield Community College

Rationale

At Icknield Community College, we aim to provide a safe, caring and friendly environment for all our pupils to allow them to learn effectively, improve their life chances and help them maximise their potential.

The school is committed to supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all students. It is only by attending school regularly and punctually that children and young people will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

The whole school community: students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

Policy Development

This policy was formulated in consultation with the whole school community with input from students, staff, parents/carers and governors. It is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

Roles and Responsibilities

	Responsibility
Governing Body & Headteacher	Involving and engaging the whole school community in understanding the importance of good attendance; Setting targets for attendance and monitoring progress; Reviewing the attendance policy every year and monitoring its implementation.
Deputy Headteacher	Overall responsibility for the policy, its implementation and liaison with the governing body, parents/carers, the LA and the DfE; Appointment of a member of staff who will have general responsibility for the implementation of this policy; Reporting to Governors on the implementation of the Attendance Policy; Oversight of the work of the Attendance Officers, including the reporting and recording of attendance; Directing the intervention work of the Home School Link Worker Evaluation of the policy and ensuring that this informs policy review; Assessing and coordinating training and support for staff and parents/carers; Co-coordinating strategies, through all staff, for improving attendance.

	Implementation of the policy, target-setting and monitoring of progress towards targets, including the monitoring of attendance for Pupil Premium students and other vulnerable groups
Attendance Officers	Checking morning registers and liaison with Attendance and Engagement team as appropriate;
	Monitoring first day calling;
	Reporting attendance and punctuality figures for each year group, with figures for each tutor group circulated to tutors and Progress Managers;
	Provide any necessary information for the Governing Body, SLT, Progress Managers etc;
	Support Progress Managers and Form Tutors in their role, informing them on a fortnightly basis any student who is below 95% and 90%.
	Report attendance for different groups (EAL, FSM, Ethnicity, Gender, SEN, Year Group, Traveller, Young Carers' etc) to the Senior Deputy Headteacher, Head of Student Services and Progress Managers on a fortnightly basis;
	Be proactive in identifying issues underlying attendance and punctuality issues;
	Work to ensure profile of Attendance is raised across the school;
	Liaise with parents/LA/other schools etc to provide solutions for long-term attendance issues, including Parent Contract meetings if a student's attendance falls below 90%;
	To review any Parent Contracts for students whose attendance is a cause for concern to ensure that appropriate action can be taken;
	Work with the Data Manager to provide all necessary information for annual attendance returns;
	To complete and provide all documentation necessary under Local Authority guidelines including part time timetable returns and unauthorised holiday referrals;
Home School Link Worker	Supporting the work of the Attendance Officers.
	Working closely with parents, students and external agencies to intervene where good attendance is at risk.
Form Tutors and Progress Managers	Act as good role models for punctuality and attendance;
	Take registers promptly at the start of each lesson;
	Support the work of the Attendance Officers by encouraging and promoting good punctuality and attendance from students;

	Support students and parents/carers to identify barriers and potential solutions to punctuality and attendance issues; Maintain the profile of the punctuality and attendance policy, celebrating good attendance in tutor time and in assemblies; Participate in appropriate training/staff development.
Parents/Carers/ community	Inform the school of any issues promptly and work with school staff to resolve issues of punctuality and attendance; Be aware of and comply with the school policy regarding term-time absence. You can support your child by: ● Ensuring regular and early bed times ● Helping with homework ● Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before ● Providing a healthy breakfast ● Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly ● Retaining open & honest communication with your child's school ● Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive) ● Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates
Students	Attend school every day on time, unless there is a good reason for absence; Keep Tutors informed of any potential barriers to punctuality and attendance; Be aware of the impact of missing lessons; Work with parents/carers to plan holidays outside of term-time.

1. Registers

All staff are made aware that although there are two legal registrations (Lesson 1 and Lesson 4), the school policy is that a register is to be taken at the start of every lesson and within 10 minutes of that lesson starting.

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for completing the attendance register:

Registers close at 9.15am and 12.45pm. Any student who arrives after the closing of the register will count as absent. Students who arrive before the register closes, but who are late, will be counted as present, but will be dealt with as appropriate, depending on the reason for lateness.

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1.1 Absence from School

Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. This must be followed up in writing to explain the reason for the absence. If no reason is given the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where absence is due to illness parents/carers must inform the school and not siblings. The nature of the illness must also be stated for school records. If a child is ill for more than 6 sessions/3 days then a medical note should be provided. If it is not then the absence can be marked as unauthorised.

1.2 Categorising absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any student who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence **unless** leave has been granted by the school **in advance** or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on his behalf.

Icknield Community College recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Icknield Community College will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

1.3 Authorised Absence

Absence will be authorised where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example, in the following circumstances:

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,

- where the parent of a child is deployed in the services for 4 months or more, absence may be authorised but for no more than 5 days and proof of deployment must accompany the request eg. An official letter from the line manager. For this to be authorised the student must have attendance that is above 90%.

- where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend; Please note that where absence due to illness exceeds 6 sessions or 3 days a doctor's note should be provided.

- where the student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand; Medical/Dental appointments should be accompanied by an appointment card or other written confirmation.

- where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong;

- in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period.**

(Note: absence may not be authorised even in these circumstances where the student has a poor attendance history or is a persistent absentee with attendance below 90% but the school must still be informed)

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;

- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;

- the student is staying at home to mind the house;

- the student is shopping during school hours;

- the student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday, looking after other children;

- the student is absent from school on a family holiday.

- the student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

- excessive illness without medical evidence

1.4 Approved educational activity
Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

1.5 Class registers
In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the school office and measures taken to locate the student and/or inform parents and carers.

1.6 Staff Training
The Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

2.   Collection and analysis of data

2.1   The Attendance Officers will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to tutors, Progress Managers, the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

2.2   Attendance is monitored by year group, tutor group, at subject level and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, and students with special educational needs, those in receipt of the Pupil Premium and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

2.3   Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

3.   Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance and strategies for dealing with unexplained absence

Attendance has a very high profile at Icknield Community College and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed prominently in school. Students' are encouraged to keep their attendance above 97% and the School target for attendance is 96%.

The school rewards students with good or improving attendance in a variety of ways including termly certificates, prize draws, postcards home etc.

When attendance drops below 96% we have a system in place to help to get attendance back on track as soon as possible to avoid it impacting on learning. See Appendix 1.

3.1   First-day calling

There is a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

If absence continues with no explanation beyond 3 days and the school cannot get in touch with parents then a referral to the County Attendance Team will be made.

3.2   Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. A Parent Contract will be put in place with the parents and student to resolve any difficulties and set targets

to improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them. If attendance does not improve after the review period then a number of things may happen:

- The parent will be sent a letter from the Acer Trust regarding attendance and the Parent Contract may be extended for a short period.
- An Early Help Assessment maybe done to access more support for the student and family.
- A Penalty Notice may be given.
- A referral to the County Attendance Team may be made.

3.3   Referral to the Education Attendance Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team.

3.4   Lateness and punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Students who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team.

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all students arriving late follow this procedure**.

For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day should sign in/out at the school office.

3.5   Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a student goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. Icknield Community College takes this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. If, however, a student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will try to make contact with his/her parents immediately.

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4. Other Absences

4.1 Study Leave

Icknield Community College believes that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, and students will be expected to attend school in the usual way.

4.2 Absence due to RAF posting

If a student leaves us due to posting they are expected to attend their new school within 1 week of moving unless this coincides with school holidays. We have a duty to track students who leave us until they arrive in their new school and should there be a delay in starting a new school without a reason given, the Local Authority will need to be informed.

4.3 Traveller Absence

When Traveller families are travelling for occupational reasons, absence from school must be requested in the usual way. To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and at ICC. Children from these groups whose families do not travel for occupational reasons are expected to attend as normal.

5. Exceptional Leave

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments came into force on 1 September 2013.

The amendments remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that **Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time** unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Application for leave of absence must be made at least 4 weeks in advance by the parent/guardian with whom the child normally resides by writing to the Headteacher. Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to **exceptional circumstances**. Parents will be informed of the outcome of their request within 5 school days.

Please be aware that there is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

1.	It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
2.	Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school, further education and employment.

3. Graduates earn, on average, double that of young people that leave school with no qualifications.
4. All schools in Oxfordshire are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising Exceptional Leave.
5. The Head Teacher will liaise with every family applying for Exceptional Leave to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance & attainment.
6. Exceptional leave is most unlikely to be authorised when a student's attendance is less than 95%.
7. Exceptional leave should always be refused when school is aware of any truancy.
8. Exceptional leave should always be refused when requests are regular (annual) or when patterns become identifiable.
9. Reasons for Exceptional Leave should be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team. This may result in prosecution proceedings or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.

As of 1 September 2013 the rate per parent per child will be £60 if paid within 21 days and rising to £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days.

If the penalty notice is not paid, each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to a maximum of £1000, plus costs.

6. Penalty Notices and Legal Action

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the County Attendance Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the County Attendance Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable

damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

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Appendix 1: Attendance System

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│ Less than 96% - Letter 1                     │
│                                              │
│ Less than 90% Persistent Absentee Letter     │
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                        ▼
             ┌──────────────────────┐
             │  Monitor (4 weeks)   │
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Improvement	No Improvement
No Action	Attendance Follow-Up <u>or</u>
Monitor	Parenting Contract meeting

Review (4 weeks)

Improvement	No Improvement
Monitor	Acer Trust Letter
Praise on a postcard	Extend PC (4 weeks)
	Possible Penalty Notice given

Review

Improvement	No improvement
Extend PC 4 weeks to maintain focus	Governor Panel Meeting
Praise on a postcard	Request for support
	Interagency Planning meeting

Review (4 weeks)

Improvement	No improvement
Extend PC 4 weeks to maintain focus	Have we done all we can to support child/family?
Praise on a postcard	

Yes	No
Referral to County Attendance Team	Continue working with child/family
	Contact CAT for advice